

VZCZCXRO2383  
OO RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR  
DE RUEHLM #0111/01 0431156  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 121156Z FEB 10  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1300  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2420  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 9442  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 7697  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5447  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 3858  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0033  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0233  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0851  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 4496  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 0003  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 7237  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0228  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0140  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000111

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INSB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2020

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: FM BOGOLLAGAMA SUMMONS CHARGE FOR FOLLOW-UP ON  
FONSEKA, U.S. STATEMENT

COLOMBO 00000111 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES VALERIE C. FOWLER. REASONS: 1.4 (B, D  
)

1. (C) On February 12, Foreign Minister Bogollagama summoned Charge to provide more information regarding her question at a February 11 briefing for the diplomatic corps regarding General Fonseka's medical care. At the February 11 briefing the FM enumerated the legal provisions that govern the process underway following the decision to arrest General Fonseka on February 8. When asked whether General Fonseka would be able to receive care from his personal physician, an active duty Army officer, the FM affirmed to the assembled diplomatic corps that General Fonseka would be able to select the medical care of his choice, adding that clearly his own physician would know the general's medical situation best. The FM told Charge on February 12 that immediately after the briefing he had met with President Rajapaksa and told him of Charge's "useful and helpful" question and his reply. The FM wanted to share with the embassy the president's response that the government would not only permit General Fonseka to use medical care of his choice, the government would actively support visits by the general's doctors and family.

2. (C) The Foreign Minister stressed that Sri Lanka is a land of laws and cited two events on February 12 that he said prove the importance of due process. He noted the Supreme Court decision to grant leave to proceed in the Fundamental Human Rights petition filed by General Fonseka's wife and commented that the early date of February 23 to hear the case indicated that the court understood the importance and timeliness of this case. The FM highlighted the critical comments by a "junior magistrate" (Colombo Chief Magistrate, Champa Janaki Rajaratne) regarding the police handling of the protest outside of the Supreme Court building on February 10, commenting that her critique of the police for bias in favor of the government showed the independence of the judiciary.

13. (C) Foreign Minister Bogollagama noted that the election process is now underway and that he expected and hoped there would be vibrant participation in the parliamentary elections, as we had seen for the presidential elections. He said he wished to inform the embassy that "the opposition has a tendency to rake up issues for political gain, and when elements from outside support these agendas, it can be difficult." He immediately stressed that he was not referring to the United States but cautioned that the opposition wanted to make non-issues into issues. The Charge responded that on occasion government officials also made statements for political gain and noted that the FM had a copy in front of him of the embassy's February 10 press release regarding Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa's allegations on U.S. financial support of Fonseka's presidential campaign. The Charge told the Foreign Minister that the U.S. had found the defense secretary's comments surprising, distressing, and even provocative, and that there was no truth to his allegation that we had provided financial support to the opposition candidate. FM Bogollagama said that he knew that the comments were false and had said so bluntly earlier that day in his press briefing when asked about the defense secretary's comments. The Charge mentioned the FM's agreement, from an earlier meeting with the Ambassador, that the U.S. had a right to defend itself in such circumstances. The FM agreed, noting that he had made the same point when he was asked about our embassy press statement in his briefing. He said that he explained that as Foreign Minister it was his responsibility to support the right of a bilateral partner to defend its national reputation when called into question.

COMMENT

COLOMBO 00000111 002.2 OF 002

-----

14. (C) Following the embassy's press statement of February 11 regarding Gotabhaya Rajapaksa's allegations, this meeting could have gone either way, but Bogollagama chose cordiality.

They appear to have recognized our line in the sand and seem to be walking back the allegations. Their response on Fonseka's medical care also hold promise -- if they follow through.

FOWLER